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ABSTRACT

The need to decrease the number of students repeatedly receiving after-school detentions was addressed by the implementation of the Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) program. The PAL program is based on the premise that students act out because they desire power. The program gave students power over tutoring situations by having input into planning for themselves and others. The PAL program began with 24 students in grades four through six, although one student withdrew leaving a total of 23 students. Tutoring sessions took place two times per week for a period of 20 minutes. The student tutors met with the researcher and the classroom teacher on alternate Fridays for 20 to 30 minutes. The PAL program was evaluated by a review of the discipline records which indicated a decrease in the number of after-school detentions received by the target group who were classified as behavior problems. Self-esteem in regard to the students' behavior was increased as measured by the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale-Revised (1984). Pro-social behavior was also monitored via teacher checklists. Critical thinking skills were utilized in developing lesson plans for each week. Various forms are appended. (ABL)

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USING PEER ASSISTED LEARNING (PAL) TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF AFTER-SCHOOL DETENTIONS AND INCREASE SELF-ESTEEM AMONG FOURTH THROUGH SIXTH GRADE TUTORS WHO ARE CONSIDERED TO BE DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS

by

Kathy Ann Keane

A Practicum Report

submitted to the Faculty of the Center for the Advancement of Nova University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science.

The abstract of this report may be placed in a National Database System for reference.

August/1992

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Abstract

Using Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) to Reduce the Number of After-School Detentions and Increase Self-Esteem Among Fourth through Sixth Grade Tutors Who are considered to be Discipline Problems.
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The need to decrease the number of students repeatedly receiving after-school detentions was addressed by the implementation of the Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) program. The PAL program is based on the premise that students act out because they desire power. The program gave students power over tutoring situations by having input into planning for themselves and others. The PAL program was evaluated by a review of the discipline records which indicated a decrease in the number of after-school detentions received by the target group who were classified as behavior problems. Self-esteem in regard to the students' behavior was increased as measured by the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale-Revised (1984). Pro-social behavior was also monitored via teacher checklists. Critical thinking skills were utilized in developing lesson plans for each week. Appendices include tutor and tutee information record sheets, a tutor log sheet, and graphic analysis of improvement in self-esteem.

Authorship Statement

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. When it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpubished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give this testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other professionals in the field and in the hope that my own work, presented here, will earn similar respect.

Signed: Kathy Keane
Kathy A. Keane

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CHAPTER I

Purpose

The setting in which this study took place is a centrally located, southern, urban area. The educational institution was comprised of 83 faculty and staff members and 750 students in grades kindergarten through sixth. The student population included varying ability levels and several exceptional education programs. These exceptional education programs included: three classes of hearing impaired students, two classes of educably mentally handicapped students, and one self-contained specific learning disabilities class. Special education services also available to children enrolled at this institution were: two resource emotionally handicapped teachers, one resource specific learning disabilities teacher and two supplemental reading program (Chapter I) teachers.

The Socio-economic status of the students enrolled varied. Five hundred fifteen students qualified for either free or reduced price lunches. There were 119 students on special assignment due to a Boys and Girls

Club nearby. Students participated in the Club for after-school care and activities. There was a 60:40 ratio of White to Black students, respectively.

This researcher had five years of experience in the field of specific learning disabilities as a resource teacher. Three of these five years had been spent at said institution. The role of resource teacher had allowed this researcher to become an integral part of the faculty by acting as consultant to regular education teachers who identify students having learning difficulties in the classroom.

This researcher also served on a variety of committees, some of which included: Educational Planning Committee, Children's Services Team, Steering Committee, and the Discipline Committee. Duties of this educator also included serving on hall duty and monitoring Saturday School.

This institution took part in site-based decision making. Site-based decision making was initiated by the County to empower each school site with decision making abilities. Each site had the ability to make decisions based on the individual needs of that particular school.

The site-based plan at this institution was the development and implementation of an after-school detention and Saturday school program. This program was designed in an attempt to reduce the number of discipline referrals and suspensions. This educator had noticed a number of students receiving after-school detention on a regular basis.

Student behavior or misbehavior is considered by many as a threat to our public schools. Curriculum revisions and quality teachers are not the only things needed in order to make the system work. Public schools can be improved by administrators and teachers who are willing to be innovative and flexible regarding discipline alternatives (Rudolph, 1984).

Suspension has long been regarded as the "cure-all" for discipline problems. Uchitelle (1989) reported that in typical public school settings, the reasons for suspensions were fighting, disruptive behaviors or insubordination. These behaviors reflect interpersonal adjustment problems with peers and authority figures. These behaviors seem to be typical of disruptive or behavior problem students. Suspension, however, becomes

thought of as a reward and therefore is relatively ineffective.

Suspension may also have severe negative connotations. Studies show that

> students suspended repeatedly in elementary grades are 12 times more likely to experience multiple suspensions in the middle grades than students without such a record. In short, ... frequent suspensions set young students up for further school suspension and eventual dropping out. (Massachusetts, 1987:4).

Punishment itself in regard to behavior modifications has its own objections. Students begin to see that school success is something they will not achieve. Whether punished or not, these students resort to or continue delinquent or antisocial behavior to achieve a positive self-image (Weis & Sederstron, 1981).

It is important to consider

> lowering the rate of suspensions without jeopardizing the school code of conduct or having a negative impact on the orderliness of the school's climate... When students are suspended, they lose valuable learning time, which has a negative impact on their academic progress...(Uchitelle, 1989:174).

Accepting that suspension is not the one and only answer to discipline problems, many alternatives began to be considered in the mid 1970's. One main idea on the

discipline issue was utilizing a more positive approach (Rudolph, 1984). A communications system should be utilized between school personnel and parents as a means of positive discipline (Allen, 1981). Many alternatives to suspension exist and are utilized in all educational settings. Some of these programs include: in-school withdrawal and suspension programs, alternative interventions to suspension, and preventive approaches which promote positive discipline (Oppenheimer, 1988).

Based on Oppenheimer's (1988) premise that teachers, administrators, and other school personnel believe that students prefer to be in school rather than out of school and that it is best for the student to remain in school rather than be suspended, this institution had developed a Site-Based Plan designed to decrease the number of discipline referrals and the number of suspensions. School rules were clearly defined to the students in terms which were easily understood. A video was made in order for the students to see examples and non-examples of appropriate versus inappropriate behavior. This discipline tape was reviewed at least two times throughout the year as a reminder of behavior which is

acceptable at school. The five rules were as follows: Show respect for persons and property; keep all hands, feet and objects to self; no profane or abusive language; no running; no candy, gum or toys brought to school. The Site-Based Plan mandated that a child who broke either rule number one or two received a day in Saturday school. Saturday school required the child come to school from 8:30 to 11:30 on Saturday morning as an alternative form of detention. During this time, the child completed work from a file indicated for that particular grade level. The work was typically review or practice worksheets. Any student who broke rules three through five received an after-school detention. Detention was held on Monday and Thursday each week from 2:10 to 3:00. During this time, the child was required to copy, repeatedly, the five aforementioned rules.

At this institution, there were several students who repeatedly received after-school detentions. The frequency of repeat offenses by this particular student population indicated that a different approach was necessary.

According to the discipline records, 76 students, 36 percent, in grades four through six had received after-school detentions. Of this number, 24 students had received two or more after-school detentions within the second nine weeks grading period. According to the Site-Based Plan, after the acquisition of the third after-school detention, the student received a sentence of Saturday school.

This educator felt that this time spent after school "writing rules" could have been much better spent in a more positive educational interaction. Preferably, a more positive interaction would not only benefit the target students, but other students within the school as well. In other words, the current discipline program was ineffective in keeping disruptive students from repeating offenses. Possible reasons for the limited success of the current plan included: lack of consistency in applying consequences across teachers and administrators, lack of parent permission for students to be kept after school hours, teacher reluctance to complete the necessary paperwork to refer a student for after-school detention or Saturday school, students who are not

stopped from misbehaving by threats of after-school time, and possible low self-esteem among students who appear to invite punishment. There should have been a discipline plan in place designed to minimize occurrences of repeat discipline offenses. There should have been no more than 12 students who repeatedly needed administrative level discipline. This showed that there was a discrepancy of 12 students (50 percent) repeatedly receiving after-school detention. The discrepancy lies between the number of students who were frequently in trouble and those who learn effectively not to repeat misbehaviors. There was a need to redefine and modify the current discipline plan to become more effective in alleviating discipline problems. The target group of students who had received two or more detentions in the second nine weeks had become a source of frustration and disruption not only to the teachers but the administration as well. The students who were repeatedly in trouble were frequently brought to the attention of the Child Study Team, the Discipline Committee, Special Education Consultants, and the Guidance Counselor. These children

were also discussed informally in conversations with teachers, administrators, and the like.

To determine whether or not self-esteem was a variable which influenced student misbehavior, the target 24 students who repeatedly earned formal school punishment were administered the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale-Revised (Piers, 1984). Specifically, student self-esteem in the following areas was assessed: Behavior, Intellectual and School Status, Anxiety, Happiness and Satisfaction. The test developer cited average self-esteem as falling between the percentile ranks of 31 and 70. In the area of Happiness, four of 24 students ranked below the thirty-first percentile. In the area of Anxiety, three of the target 24 students ranked below the thirty-first percentile. In the area of Intellectual and School Status, four of the target 24 students ranked below the thirty-first percentile. In the area of Behavior, 11 of the 24 students who repeatedly break school rules ranked below the thirty-first percentile. Clearly, the area of Behavior is in need of improvement for those students who have learned to view themselves negatively in this domain. It is

known that poor self-esteem leads to decreased behavioral and academic performance (Wehlage, 1987). Repeat discipline offenders are at high risk for low self-esteem. No more than 10 percent of the target 24 students should have continued to experience the damaging feelings of poor self-esteem, which could possibly be related to negative forms of correction. There was a discrepancy of at least eight of the target 24 students who should have been helped to more positively view behavior as related to the self. There was a need to devise and implement a plan to assist these students to improve behavior and self-esteem related to behavior.

Schools today are not only responsible for teaching academics but social values as well. While children are learning, certain rules should be followed. If the rules are broken, the child is expected to face the consequences. This researcher agrees with Leader (1989) that consequences should also allow for a positive impact on the child.

Morris (1991) suggested educational experiences that can have positive impacts on children with problem behaviors. These experiences can include cross-age

tutoring. Cross-age tutoring is a method where the behavior offender is taught to become a tutor to younger children, thus empowering the student over the learning environment. This also provides a positive educational result for the tutor and tutee. This positive empowerment will not only lead to an awareness regarding learning and studying, but will also increase self-esteem (Bowermaster, 1986).

As a result of this project, several objectives were considered. Upon completion of the Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) Program with 24 targeted, habitually referred fourth through sixth graders for a period of 12 weeks, a 50 percent reduction in the number of after-school detentions would be achieved. This reduction was measured by a review of the discipline records.

After participation for 12 weeks in the Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) program, an increase in self-esteem in regard to behavior would be indicated to at least the thirty-first percentile on the behavior domain of the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale-Revised (Piers, 1984) among 90 percent of the target group of 24

fourth through sixth grade students receiving repeated after-school detentions.

Over a period of 12 weeks of direct instruction in pro-social skills training, the 24 targeted fourth through sixth grade students with past discipline problems would show an increase in five specific behaviors designed to promote positive peer and teacher interaction. Improvement in these behaviors was measured by a review of each target student's tutoring log sheet (Appendix A:62) that was kept by the teachers. Improvement on the part of the student tutor in the areas of greetings, asking questions, answering questions, complimenting, and above all, listening, were to be noted by the researcher and the tutee's teacher. The peer tutor (past discipline offender) would utilize appropriate greetings when initiating or responding to verbal or physical behavior that acknowledges another person, specifically the tutee and the teacher. When asking questions, the tutor would initiate verbal interaction in order to obtain information, feedback or opinions from another person, namely the tutee. The tutor would answer questions by giving a complete verbal

response related to a direct question. The tutor would compliment by making appropriate verbal or physical responses to indicate approval or praise to another person (the tutee). When listening, the tutor would pay particular attention to the needs, concerns and comments of both the tutee and the teacher (Trapani, 1989).

Over a period of 12 weeks, 100 percent of the 24 tutors took part in brainstorming, self-evaluation, and critical thinking skills activities as measured by regular attendance (80 percent) at bimonthly meetings with the researcher to discuss progress and planning for the following weeks.

Results from this program may extend beyond the realms mentioned above. Other benefits may include, but may not be limited to, students feeling success, receiving recognition, and gaining self-confidence and respect for others. An increase in attendance and improved classroom and school behavior may also be achieved if tutors are encouraged to feel a certain amount of control over the learning environment.

CHAPTER II

Research and Solution Strategy

This researcher discovered a wealth of research related to effective learning strategies and programs in relation to reducing discipline problems and increasing self-esteem. Many approaches have been utilized by educators in an effort to reduce discipline problems while at the same time maintaining or increasing self-esteem. This researcher chose a few of the many strategies others have tried. These strategies, in combination, were selected to assist in solving the discipline problem and to improve the self-esteem of the target group within the institution.

Jason (1983), described Comp-Tutor, an alternative model for school mental health professionals. This program was designed to meet the vast need to assist children with social, behavioral, and academic deficiencies. A total of six tutors in the eighth grade were selected because of academic or behavioral difficulties experienced in school. In the initial stage of the Comp-Tutor program, tutors were taught about

computers and computer functions. Graduation to training in computer entry and programming in BASIC language followed. After a short time, students were able to write basic question and answer programs.

After mastery of the initial stage of the program, the tutors began helping younger students operate the computer. During this phase, tutors were encouraged to form "big brother" or "big sister" relationships with the younger students in order to help with academic and social problems the children might encounter. It was noted throughout the program that no rebellion or reluctance to learn was noted by the supervisors of the program. These behaviors were very often encountered by the regular education teacher.

Another program utilized 18 socially maladjusted and emotionally disturbed students between the ages of 15 and 18 as tutors (Maher, 1983). The children chosen for the study were selected randomly from a growing population that had become a concern for administrators and teachers due to maladaptive behavior.

Tutors of the Cross-Age Tutoring Program (CAT) were provided with an orientation conducted by the district school psychologist prior to tutoring. The workshop

included discussing a child's instructional needs with the classroom teacher, setting weekly goals, preparing for instruction, evaluating goals, and providing reinforcement to the child for task completion.

Results of the CAT program showed that the most significant decrease in discipline referrals and number of absences were found among students who received cross-age tutoring as opposed to peer tutoring or group counseling. Interviews with the tutors' teachers revealed that most found a positive change in academic and social behavior due to the program. Maher (1983) also points out that this program may be utilized as a preventative approach; possibly at the beginning of the school year before the opportunity for misbehavior occurs.

A study to determine the effectiveness of direct instruction and peer tutoring was conducted by Winder et al. (1990). The group to be studied was an entire second grade class taught by two alternate methods, direct instruction and peer tutoring. The alternate teaching method lasted for a period of 16 days. Nine disruptive behaviors were recorded during each session: out-of-seat behavior, talking, stalling, aggression, incomplete

tasks, following directions, attitude, arguing and disruptive noises. Stalling and negative attitudes were more frequent in the direct instruction group. Among the tutoring group, unacceptable behaviors were reduced, except for arguing.

Acquisition of pro-social behaviors is also important for educational success. Some students have great difficulty in the ability to socialize. One such group is the learning disabled population. Learning disabled children have problems interacting with both teachers and parents and a problem with behavior in general. Problems with peer relations have been traced to early problems in peer group status. These problems may lead to adolescent delinquency in later life. According to Strain (1981) peer tutoring can incorporate the use of appropriate social skills with the knowledge of appropriate behavior. Familiarity with these skills and behavior will facilitate the generalization of appropriate social behavior into real life situations. Reinforcers students receive for appropriate social behavior are usually stronger if received from peers (Strain, 1981).

Trapani and Gettinger (1989) developed a cross-age tutoring program to improve the academic and social behavior of learning disabled boys. The subjects of the study were 20 learning disabled boys in grades four through six. The average intelligence of the group was 93.90 as measured by the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Revised (WISC-R). Other measures used as pre and post test evaluations were the Walker Problem Behavior Identification Checklist and the Test of Written Spelling. Target behaviors for this study were: greeting, listening, asking questions, and complimenting. Direct observation was also used at three different points throughout the study to determine the frequency and appropriateness of each social behavior. The points of observation were before the social skills training, after the social skills training but before initiation of the tutoring component, and after tutoring. Prior to tutoring, tutors were provided with social skills training and communication skills training. Training was carried out via direct instruction, role playing and positive and negative examples of behavior. The tutors were observed and feedback was given on the five target behaviors immediately following the tutoring session.

Tutors also had a self-monitoring checklist of behaviors they completed after each session.

Results of this study showed that there was no difference in pre and post tests in regards to social skills training. However, after the tutoring sessions, the students increased in greeting skills and answering questions skills. There also appeared to be a significant amount of carry over to the classroom situation. Eighty-five percent of the tutoring group increased on the Test of Written Spelling. There were only 28 percent and 33 percent increases among the comparison group and the control group, respectively.

The Cross-Age Tutoring program fostered personal responsibility and an increase in expectations of children with learning disabilities in regard to personal performance. It was felt that tutoring provided application of knowledge, motivation towards acceptable behavior and development of appropriate social communication. Social skills, such as those listed as target behaviors, are among social behaviors valued the least by educators who are pressured to value academics according to Gresham and Reschly (1986). Although this may be the case, social skills are extremely important to

success outside of the school setting. If pro-social behaviors are not rewarded or encouraged, these behaviors may never be obtained or maintained (Gresham & Reschly, 1986).

Schools are no longer responsible for teaching strictly academics. Education is also responsible for social skills, morals, and much more. Wehlage (1987), stated that schools have the responsibility to become effective as well as attractive. The school system should offer something positive to the students and society. Wehlage (1987) also discussed the problem of students continually encountering academic failure, non-caring attitudes from teachers, and discipline programs that are ineffective and unfair. This inconsistency may lead to alienation and possibly dropping out of school. Schools must change to include and promote student interactions. These interactions must begin with positive social bonds between the teachers and the students. Wehlage's (1987) program examines administration and organization, teacher culture, student culture and curriculum. Based on a "school within a school" concept, the experimental program incorporated 25 to 100 students and between two and six faculty members.

The number of student participants was maintained at a fairly low rate due to the need for face-to-face interaction with faculty members. Personalized and individualized instruction helped to keep track of each student and low student to teacher ratio fostered a sense of caring to the students.

Wehlage's (1987) program was strictly voluntary on the part of both the student and teacher. The students applied and were willing and honest regarding their problems at school. Students committed to a change in themselves, change in rules, work habits, behavior and attendance patterns. The teachers who participated believed that students deserved another chance at learning and extended their role to include counseling in regard to home problems, and other problems the students wished to discuss.

Social skills were improved due to this "family" type atmosphere. Caring adults and peers interacted to improve social behavior. Pre and post test surveys completed by the students indicated that the program had a great effect on self-esteem and behavior. Several other schools have replicated this model. The programs were also evaluated by utilizing a number of criteria

including pre and post tests to measure changes in students' attitudes, feelings regarding themselves and others, and perceptions of future success. Overall results of all programs indicated a great effect on student behavior and attitude.

Caring and cooperation are two important interactions, not only in the school setting, but in every day life as well. Cooperative learning and tutoring programs can provide the experience and practice in cooperating with others in a variety of settings. This practice is important for the transferring of social skills to real life situations.

Gorrell (1986) investigated helping relationships between eighth grade tutors and first grade tutees during a semester long tutoring project. Eight categories of interactions were studied: on task, prompting and guiding, praising and encouraging, adjusting to child's needs, managing behavior problems, allowing autonomous performance, and bonding and cooperation.

Twenty-four pairs of eighth and first graders were matched according to student's sex and teacher judgment. Two weeks prior to the tutoring sessions, tutors received training in tutoring skills and handwriting skills.

Behaviors and dialogue were recorded for use in analysis after the completion of the tutoring sessions. Cooperation and flexibility among tutor and tutee developed over the weeks. Tutors encouraged tutees to become involved and make decisions regarding the tasks. The tutors developed and maintained pride in the progress of the tutees throughout the project. Some problems were noted in regard to on-task behavior. Tutors, at times, had difficulty keeping the tutees on task. However, over the course of the semester, on-task behavior of tutees did improve.

Teachers were trained in observation techniques. The pairs were observed at least once a week for six weeks. Pairs of students were then rotated to be observed by other teachers. Each observation was transcribed and typed for final analysis by the panel of observers. The results were analyzed for agreement among the trained observers. Each pair was rated on the aforementioned eight categories of interactions. Observations from Gorrell (1986) suggests that there are many social and emotional gains possible in cross-age tutoring. Older students become more aware of the needs of others, gain skills in teaching and build self-

confidence. Positive long term relationships were built when the tutoring program was implemented for a semester period. It is unlikely that brief tutoring arrangements would create the warm, friendly atmosphere that was created during this semester-long project.

Zeeman (1982) reports that students' interaction with the school environment leads to feelings of inadequacy due in part to powerlessness and insufficient support from the teachers. Schools should focus on breaking down the walls in order to reach alienated adolescents. Zeeman's study (1982) included 36, tenth through twelfth graders who were paired with 27 second and third grade pupils. The high school students were selected by teacher recommendation. The target students were considered to have academic achievement below ability and a tendency to exhibit unacceptable behaviors.

The high school students were assigned to one of four groups. Group one participated in a 17 week psychology course for which they received high school credit. Members of group two were to participate as mathematics tutors at an elementary school two days per week. Each tutor was assigned to one tutee for a period of 15 weeks. Tutors were required to maintain logs

pertaining to the sessions. Supervision occurred weekly. Students in group three tutored two days per week and attended the psychology class three days per week. Group four was considered the control group. These students participated in the regular high school program.

A pre and post survey of "School Behavior Measures" was completed by the high school students. This survey analyzed academic self-concept and school behavior. The survey showed improvement in academic self-concept for each of the three treatment groups. The tutor group also displayed a significant reduction in expressed inability regarding academic tasks (Zeeman, 1982).

Along with feelings of powerlessness comes the possibility of juvenile delinquency. Delinquency is also caused by academic frustration and non-acceptance by peers (Lazerson et al., 1988). Lazerson attempted to diminish poor self-concept and feelings of self-dissatisfaction with his cross-age tutoring (CAT) program.

The CAT approach utilized in the study offers many appealing factors to learning disabled students. Tutoring places this group of students in the role of the teacher in order to reinforce academics, build self-

concept, and encourage positive social interaction. It also teaches responsibility while encouraging good behavior.

Thirty-two learning disabled students participated in the Lazerson et al. (1988) program. The target group consisted of all males between the ages of six and 15. Sixteen members of the group were between 11 and 15 with a mean intelligence quotient of 90. This older group became the tutors. The tutee group consisted of 16 boys between the ages of six and 10. Tutors were trained in regard to responsibilities, reinforcement techniques, and correcting responses from tutees. The training also made sure that tutors were familiar with the structure of the program. Actual tutoring occurred three times per week for 20-minute sessions.

The Bailer Locus of Control Scale was administered before and after the program's implementation. This scale is designed to measure internal and external locus of control. Locus of control being the individual's ability to view the relationship between behavior and consequences and the ability to have control over the situation. Truancy and tardiness charts were also kept.

The tutors were also asked to fill out questionnaires pre and post in regards to their personal lifestyles.

In reviewing the results, it was found that on the pre-test Bailer there was an average score of 6.3 which indicates a strong external locus of control. On the post-test, an average of 13.3 was obtained. This score indicates a dramatic increase toward an internal locus of control. The CAT program resulted in a positive correlation between a consistent tutoring program and an increase in scores and a significant positive impact on the tutor's locus of control. This increase in the locus of control helped to enhance the students' feelings of self-concept.

Since traditional education programs usually do not work for at-risk students, Greene (1989) developed an alternative program for 400, at-risk, high school students. The goal of the project was to increase self-esteem in hopes of producing a higher level of achievement. The program is based on the four A's: Attention, Acceptance, Appreciation and Affection. Students in the program become empowered by assisting in rule making and by sharing in the enforcement of the rules. The students' suggestions on how to change the

school environment were truly valued and respected by the staff members. With this input, the school was changed to better meet the students' needs.

A student survey and a review of student records best report the successful results of Greene's (1989) program. The student survey indicated an increase in self-esteem and the records reported that of students entering this high school, 60 percent failed two or more classes in the previous semester, 80 percent missed more than 70 percent of their classes in the previous semester, and 30 percent were on probation. After attending and participating in this high school, 78 percent improved attendance, only five percent were on probation and 86 percent graduated.

Solution Strategy

A review of the research presented many ways in which the schools can utilize cooperative learning situations. This researcher investigated a variety of avenues under the auspices of cooperative learning. As a result of extensive research, this researcher felt that the target group could both decrease inappropriate

behavior and increase self-esteem by utilizing a learning approach known as cross-age tutoring.

Cross-age tutoring provided a more acceptable discipline measure. Students did not waste valuable learning time, but enhanced this learning time by sharing it with others. This educator believed that through implementation of a positive discipline program the number of students who continually repeated after-school detentions would decrease. The Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) Program utilized the cooperative learning strategies of cross-age tutoring in order to facilitate a decrease in after-school detentions issued to the target group. This researcher believed strongly that along with positive forms of discipline in education, came an increase in self-esteem. It is felt that an increase in appropriate behavior coincides with improved self-esteem. The implementation of this positive program with the target students was intended as a preventative measure in order to alleviate the need for serving the Saturday school which is issued after three detentions.

Based on research by Jason (1983), Maher (1983) and Winder et al. (1990), this researcher chose target students for this project who were described as socially

maladjusted, or who repeatedly exhibited behavior problems in school. It was felt that less rebellion and acting out would be encountered during this project than prior to implementation. This result would be due to increased student responsibility and input into the learning environment. Along with this increase in responsibility comes an increase in self-esteem and self-confidence (Trapani & Gettinger, 1989; Wehlage, 1987; Gorrell, 1986). This researcher firmly believes that students need to have a feeling of belonging and self-worth. Self-worth leads to growth in relationships of all types.

This researcher found suggestions for a cross-age tutoring program by Trapani and Gettinger (1989) very helpful and informative. One suggestion was to provide a training session before the actual tutoring began. Therefore, in the PAL program a training session was set up for the target students. This researcher met with all 24 students bi-monthly for training and review purposes. To enhance instruction, a guest speaker was invited. Another aspect of Trapani and Gettinger's (1989) research that was found to be useful was the utilization of a checklist in monitoring the behaviors of greeting,

listening, asking questions, and complimenting. The PAL Program utilized a checklist of behaviors as well. The behaviors monitored were: greetings, asking questions, answering questions, complimenting and listening.

The PAL Program's success was indeed due to the support of not only the faculty and staff involved in the program, but the administration as well. These personnel helped to promote positive behaviors and helped increase the students' self-esteem.

CHAPTER III

Method

In an effort to reduce the number of after-school detentions, this educator implemented a 12-week program. The program was entitled Peer Assisted Learning (PAL). The PAL program began with 24 students in grades four through six who repeatedly received after-school detentions. However, one student withdrew from the school leaving a total of 23 students.

This researcher was responsible for supervision and organization of all aspects of the program. Organization included preparing notebooks for the tutors and the researcher. The notebooks contained tutor logs, packets to use during tutoring sessions, and other pertinent information. Notebooks and other materials necessary for tutoring (pencils, crayons, index cards, glue) were organized in boxes and kept in the tutee's classroom to allow for easy access. Managerial tasks, required by this researcher, were the coordinating of tutoring times, the assignment of tutors with tutees, the supervision of the tutors, planning and implementing group meetings and

the supervision of eight teachers in their work with the target group.

Parent permission (Appendix B:64) was obtained prior to the initiation of the tutoring sessions. The parent permission facilitated documentation of data and also familiarized parents with the purpose and desired outcomes of the PAL Program.

Tutoring sessions took place two times per week for a period of 20 minutes. The sessions were coordinated on Monday through Thursday in order to accommodate class schedules. The student tutors met with the researcher and the classroom teacher on alternate Fridays for 20-30 minutes. The meeting times varied according to schedules of tutors and teachers. In meeting with the classroom teacher, the student tutor received input and feedback regarding past and future lessons. Together teacher and student developed lesson plans for the following week. These plans were based on the individual tutee's strengths and weaknesses. When the tutor met with the researcher, the focus was again on lesson plans, ideas for meeting the needs of the tutee, and controlling behavior of the tutee. This time, the tutors had input

from each other as well as from this researcher. As a group, tutors shared in discussions of topics that allowed for input regarding tutoring situations and brainstorming of possible solutions to any problems. Discussions included strategies that worked or did not work with a particular tutee. Tutors also became more comfortable in participating in group discussions.

Phase one of this program entailed planning, preparation, introduction/initiation, and instruction for the program. The remaining 10 weeks, phase two, were allotted for implementation of the tutoring sessions.

Phase two began with week three. At this time, tutoring sessions were held in the tutee's classroom two times per week for 20 minutes each. Teachers monitored and made notations on log sheets regarding the 23 student tutors' performance. Teachers were also responsible for bi-monthly meetings with the tutors on Fridays for 20 to 30 minutes. In addition, in order to facilitate an individualized discussion with each tutor, a short story time was added for the entire tutee's class. Each tutor was responsible for selecting and reading a short book to the tutee's class. These books were selected from the

researcher's personal collection of books. Books were selected and placed in the tutor boxes the week prior to story time. Also, on alternate Fridays, the teacher met with each tutor to review progress and help the tutor make plans for the following week. Several teachers opted to have the story read only to the individual tutee as opposed to the whole class. In this case, the teacher met with the tutors while the tutees were assigned seat work on the alternate Fridays. This made for a total of three meetings per week which included two tutoring sessions and either a story time (one Friday) or a group meeting with student tutors and the researcher (alternate Fridays).

The researcher monitored program initiation by visiting the classrooms on a rotating basis. Input was given in regard to marking tutor log sheets. Questions from teachers and tutors were answered at this time. Monitoring of implementation could only be accomplished during the first four weeks of tutoring due to this researcher's responsibility for her own students. For the remaining six weeks of tutoring, students were instructed to contact the researcher and/or teachers to

work out problem situations. Teachers continued meeting with the researcher and were instructed on how to monitor the student tutors.

File boxes were collected bi-monthly for review by this supervisor. Comments made by teachers and tutors were reviewed. These notations and comments were discussed at bi-monthly meetings with the student tutors and this researcher. Also at the meetings, the group discussed options for instruction, reviewed the skills they were working on (reading or math), and provided input for future lesson plans. Lesson plans were to be done individually by each tutor. However, this researcher felt it best that this activity be done as a group since the group of tutees all required review and practice in the same readiness areas. Therefore, discussion of the need for repetition and a variety of teaching modalities was the main focus when discussing and writing lesson plans as a group for each individual student. Tutors were allowed to select handouts from the packets provided in the folders to enhance the lesson plans. These handouts provided review and practice of skills appropriate for the tutee's level.

Attendance was kept for each group meeting, which was held every other week. The number of after-school detentions received by the target group of student tutors was also tracked. The detentions were monitored and displayed weekly in the researcher's classroom. A number was placed on the chart for each detention that the tutor received. The tutors checked the chart at bi-monthly meetings. When the numbers were first displayed on the chart, this researcher encountered several comments and behaviors indicating pride in the high numbers of detentions for certain individuals. As time went on, this researcher began to hear several positive comments regarding the low number of detentions found on the chart. Many students were displaying a sense of pride at the low numbers they received for the month. Students would even comment to each other regarding the reduction in the number of detentions. This researcher was also entering detention information weekly into a database for the purpose of data gathering regarding this project. However, by week four, the administration denied this researcher access to the discipline records located in the office. From this point on, the researcher relied

solely on weekly reports provided by the tutors' teachers. The number of detentions for each tutor were listed on the PAL Discipline Information Form (Appendix C:67).

The following time line indicates aspects of the program that were utilized in order to reduce the number of detentions, increase tutors' self-esteem and encourage critical thinking on the part of the tutor. In addition to these activities, several other aspects of the program were monitored and utilized throughout the implementation period. Twice each week, student tutors met with tutees individually. The researcher monitored student tutor detentions weekly and posted results on the classroom chart. Every other week, the researcher collected student tutor file boxes and checked tutor logs to monitor teacher comments. Group meetings with the student tutors and the researcher were also held bi-monthly. Attendance was mandatory.

During week one, this researcher prepared the tutor notebook and supervisor's notebook (guide to program). Kindergarten and first-grade teachers filled out a Tutee Information Sheet (Appendix D:69) for each tutee

candidate. The initial meeting with the student tutors was held. This meeting allowed for a positive introduction and description of the program. This researcher stressed the ability of each person in making a difference and influencing others. After this initial meeting, it was decided that the target group would be divided in half due to extreme behavior problems. Parent permission forms were sent home with each student in the group. This researcher also met with classroom teachers involved in the program to review the tutor notebook. A copy of the tutor log sheet was given to each teacher. The system for monitoring and commenting on the log sheet was reviewed. Teacher comments and concerns were shared with this researcher.

Week two involved many managerial and organizational tasks. Permission forms were collected. Tutor schedules (Appendix E:71) were distributed to both teachers for tutors and tutees. These schedules provided times, days of tutoring, room assignments and pairing of tutor and tutee. Tutees' teachers were supplied with a file box for tutors containing tutor notebook, pencils, crayons and other materials they would need in the classroom.

The second group meeting was held. At this time, Barry Morris, guest speaker, was introduced to the group. He discussed the cooperative learning aspect of the program and how to interact in a productive way with the tutees. Mr. Morris achieved a high level of enthusiasm among the target group by presenting an excellent introduction and overview.

This researcher also met with tutors during this week to review the log sheets and all information found in the notebook. The importance of accountability and the importance of fulfilling the goals set up by this program were discussed. At this meeting, tutee information was reviewed; brainstorming of ideas for the initial meeting with the tutee as well as the writing of lesson plans for the following week was accomplished. After the brainstorming session, lesson plans were developed based on tutor ideas which had been listed on the board. Tutors and tutees got to meet each other this week. A cooperative activity was utilized in order for tutors and tutees to meet. Animal pictures were cut into puzzle pieces. The tutor and tutee each received a piece of the puzzle. Both the tutor and tutee had to find the

matching piece of the puzzle in order to find their PAL. Because of the large number of students, the students remained in their small group (12 students). This researcher relied on assistance from the teacher of Emotionally Handicapped students. This teacher brought the tutees to the classroom so they could find their PAL. At this time, pictures were also taken of the tutees with their PAL. PAL buttons were made for the tutors to wear when tutoring. Buttons were made utilizing the pictures taken during this meeting.

At this point, week three, tutoring sessions began. This researcher noticed that the teachers were not marking the tutor logs appropriately. This was brought to the attention of the individual teachers involved. Tutors met with the researcher and discussed the first week of implementation. As a group, an attempt was made to "iron out" difficulties that were encountered. The tutors indicated some concern regarding the slow pacing and repetition necessary for the tutees. Together, tutors listed, on the board, things that they thought were helpful and positive for the tutees. Tutors also

selected books to read to the tutees from the researcher's collection of easy readers.

Tutoring sessions continued during week four. This researcher met with the tutees' teachers to discuss concerns and problems encountered during the previous week. The importance of marking the student log was emphasized. Another concern was for students running in the hallways. Since these students tutored at various times and there were usually two or three tutors in the hallways at a time, supervision in-route was a problem. No solution to this problem was discovered. The researcher agreed to address the problem at the next meeting and emphasize the possibility of receiving an after-school detention for running in the halls on the way to tutoring. The process of developing lesson plans with the tutors at the end of the week (Friday) was discussed. It was explained to the teachers that students would come prepared with a short book to read to the class. It was reiterated that this book time would allow the teacher the additional time necessary to review the log sheet and give input for the upcoming week's lesson plans. Teachers requested that in certain

situations, the books only be read to the individual tutee. This researcher stressed that this story time was to help them. It was agreed that the tutor would read only to the tutee if that was the teacher's preference.

Week five allowed for tutoring sessions to continue. At this time, the researcher also reviewed tutor logs. The need to check off behaviors on the tutor log sheet was discussed with individual teachers. Tutors met with the researcher to brainstorm new ideas for tutoring. A discussion was also held regarding the tutor's frustration by the tutee's slow progress. The tutors also indicated a desire to extend the tutoring period to 30 minutes. This request was denied. The group also discussed the concerns of the teachers, namely, running in the halls. Emphasis was placed on the need to set a good example.

During week six, tutoring sessions continued. The researcher met again with the teachers regarding questions and concerns. The time limit for tutoring was discussed. Teachers were asked their opinions regarding a 30-minute tutoring time versus a 20-minute tutoring time. Teachers agreed that 30 minutes would be too long

and therefore would be less effective. Once again, the importance of marking the tutor log book was reviewed. Teachers and tutors were asked to contact the researcher, after this point, if there were any problems. Story time on alternating Fridays was implemented. This time was set aside for the teachers to review lesson plans with the tutors. This story time became a bit confusing to all teachers involved with the program and to tutors as well. Tutors and teachers were confused as to when and where the tutors were supposed to be. Due to the alternating weeks and the different time schedule, this researcher decided to send out a bi-monthly reminder to the teachers of both tutors and tutees. The tutor's teachers were asked to post this information in the classroom so that tutors could be responsible for the time and place for each Friday.

Tutoring sessions continued during week seven. File boxes were collected in order to review tutor logs. A cooperative role-playing activity was attempted during the group time. Students participated with the researcher in role playing the correct and incorrect way of praising and correcting tutees. The students enjoyed

this activity. Brainstorming and critical thinking were utilized during this group meeting. Ideas for tutoring and controlling behavior were shared during this time. The tutors requested that edible rewards be given to the tutees after each tutoring session. This request was denied. A compromise was reached by the group and this researcher that stickers would be provided in the tutor's box for reward purposes. A brief discussion was held regarding the appropriateness of rewards and the best ways to reward and praise.

Week eight allowed for tutoring sessions to continue. The researcher continued to visit classrooms to observe tutoring sessions whenever possible.

Tutoring sessions continued during week nine. File boxes were collected in order to review tutor logs. A Cooperative Learning Activity emphasizing rewards and praise was initiated by this researcher. Again, role-playing was used to demonstrate the correct and incorrect ways of praising and rewarding the tutees. A group brainstorming discussion was conducted in order to discover what the tutors would like to do for the tutees after completion of the 12-week period. These ideas were

listed on the board. The suggestions ranged from a party, to preparing a goodie bag for each tutee.

Week ten was the last meeting with the tutees' teacher. Tutoring sessions continued.

Tutoring sessions continued during week eleven. This researcher collected file boxes in order to review tutor logs for the final time. As in weeks prior, attendance was taken at the group meeting. This group time was used to decide on the project for the tutees. The group consensus was to make a goodie bag for each tutee. Through discussion, it was decided that each tutee would receive a bag with candy, a pencil, and a copy of the picture used for making the PAL buttons. This researcher requested that a certificate of appreciation be attached to the bag. This researcher also created certificates of appreciation for all teacher participants. A "Thank You" reception was also planned for all teachers involved with the PAL program. It was decided that this reception would be given by this researcher after week 12 of the program.

The last tutoring sessions were held during week 12. The group time was used as a celebration for researcher,

tutor and tutee. Each tutor brought their PAL to the meeting at which time goodie bags and certificates were distributed. The PALs also joined in a cookie and punch celebration. It was encouraging to see the tutors treating their PAL as a little brother or sister.

CHAPTER IV

Results

The Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) program was designed to reduce the number of after-school detentions received by a group of 23 students who were considered behavior problems. Following 12 weeks of implementation, this researcher determined the success of the PAL program by several integral factors which are listed below.

Objective one required there to be a 50 percent reduction in the number of after-school detentions received by the target group after a period of 12 weeks. The target group included 23 habitually referred fourth through sixth grade students. This objective was measured by a review of the discipline records for each of the 23 discipline problem students. Since access to the discipline records was denied by the administration by week four, this researcher relied solely on the teacher discipline report for each week. This objective was met since there was a 52 percent reduction in the number of after-school detentions received by the target group.

Objective two focused on increasing self-esteem in regard to behavior. After 12 weeks in the PAL program, an increase in self-esteem should be indicated to at least the thirty-first percentile on the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale-Revised (Piers, 1984) by 90 percent of the 23 students in the target group who repeatedly receive after-school detention. Pre and post survey results indicate low levels of self-esteem in regard to behavior. The presurvey indicated that 57 percent of the target group had self-esteem levels at the thirty-first percentile or higher. The postsurvey indicated that 74 percent of the students were at the thirty-first percentile or higher range. Although this objective was not met, there was an increase of self-esteem among the target group (See Table 1:50). This researcher noted several cases in which the survey did not seem to accurately depict the students' true feelings toward behaviors. When questions dealt with other students harassing or fighting with the target group, almost all students responded in such a way as to indicate their superior physical aggression and dominance over others ("I would just beat them up if they mess with

me"). In reality, these students seemed easily annoyed by other students and siblings but were prone to back down when confronted physically. This researcher also felt that on both the pre and post surveys, some students knew what answers would be better accepted and responded accordingly.

Table 1

A comparison of students' pre and post survey percentiles on the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale-Revised

Student #	Pre Survey Percentile	Post Survey Percentile	Objective Met
1	5	14	
2	5	25	
3	13	25	
4	51	25	
5	18	19	
6	65	50	*
7	81	60	*
8	65	50	*
9	65	82	*
10	3	1	
11	40	82	*
12	40	39	*
13	65	39	*
14	25	31	*
15	65	60	*
16	65	82	*
17	25	31	*
18	51	50	*
19	25	60	*
20	80	82	*
21	81	39	*
22	25	39	*
23	18	31	*
24	25	withdrew	

*objective met

Objective three required that three out of five positive notations be made on the tutor log sheet. These positive notations should be made at least 15 times out of the 20 times that tutoring sessions were held during the 12 week implementation period. Improvement in these five behaviors (greetings, asking questions, complimenting, and listening) were measured by a review of each target student's tutoring log sheets. These log sheets were monitored and updated by the tutee's teacher. Comments on the log sheets were made by the teacher and this researcher. The tutor utilized appropriate greetings when initiating or responding to verbal or physical behavior that acknowledged another person, specifically the tutee and the teacher. When asking questions, the tutor initiated verbal interaction in order to obtain information, feedback or opinions from another person, namely the tutee. The tutor answered questions by giving a complete verbal response related to a direct question. The tutor complimented by making appropriate verbal or physical responses to indicate approval or praise to another person (the tutee). When listening, the tutor paid particular attention to the

needs, concerns, and comments of both the tutee and the teacher (Trapani, 1989). Seventy-eight percent of the tutors had at least three out of five positive notations on the student log sheet for 15 out of 20 tutoring sessions. The reason for achieving 78 percent of positive notations is due in part to the tedious task of having teachers check off the behaviors after each tutoring session. This researcher observed that teachers with aides to assist them in this process were the most reliable and dependable in their responses. These aides were also of great assistance during the actual tutoring sessions.

Objective four addressed the brainstorming, self-evaluation, and critical thinking skills utilized by 100 percent of the 23 tutors during the 12-week implementation period. These activities were noted and measured by regular attendance. Regular attendance was defined by 80 percent participation of all members at bimonthly meetings with the researcher to discuss progress and planning for the following weeks. This objective was met by 95.3 percent of all targeted students attending group meetings. Students who were

absent for group meetings initiated contact with the researcher to obtain any information they missed. It was also noted that students who were absent on tutoring days initiated contact with the tutee's teacher to discuss making up the session.

Anecdotally, this researcher found two items that were difficult for the teachers to monitor. First, story time on alternate weeks was very confusing not only to teachers but to tutors as well. Secondly, the checklists were difficult to maintain on a highly reliable level.

Overall, the program was well accepted by faculty, staff and administration. The principal at this institution has requested that this researcher develop and coordinate the PAL program for the following school year. The program will be considered as part of the institution's site-based plan in regard to the improvement of discipline. The program will be expanded to include those students repeatedly receiving Saturday school as well as after-school detentions. Positive comments were received from faculty and staff as well. Some personnel were concerned initially with having these discipline problem children in their classroom. During

the tutoring sessions, these same people were singing the praises of these students in regard to their behavior and level of concern toward the tutees, as well as their level of responsibility. Every faculty and staff member involved in PAL volunteered to take part in such a program in the future.

CHAPTER V

Recommendations

Teachers at the target school who participated in the Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) program were very enthusiastic and cooperative. This researcher was initially concerned with the teachers' attitude and level of cooperation toward this difficult population of students. This researcher's concerns were diminished during the 12 week implementation period. Teachers were supportive, open-minded, and offered helpful suggestions in regard to this group of students and the PAL program overall.

The teachers and administration suggested and supported the use of the PAL program for implementation for the upcoming year. This program will be expanded to include a wide range of disruptive students. Not only will students receiving after-school detention be utilized as tutors, but children receiving Saturday school will be included in the target group as well. It was discussed that a review of the discipline records for the previous year would allow this program to be utilized

as a preventive measure with these students. This educator feels that the grade levels of participants should remain the same for ease in implementation. However, more students at each grade level will be selected to participate based on discipline records. This educator would like to see the program develop into even more of a buddy system whereby tutors could fulfill even more of a "big brother" or "big sister" role with tutees. This educator also determined, through student and teacher comments, that a rotation of tutees is necessary on a nine-weeks basis.

This researcher has considered three additional considerations for the PAL program. One plan would involve the entire school in the program. The researcher suggests that teachers set up such a program with a different grade level. Each child in the intermediate grades could have a PAL in the primary grades for a nine-week period.

During the 12-week implementation period, many students expressed an interest in becoming a PAL. Students who were interested were behavior problem

children as well as children with good discipline records. Due to the amount of interest indicated by other students, a second consideration should be made which would allow the program to expand to include positive role model students. It is felt that good role models in the group would help build a positive image for the program and the tutors as well.

A third consideration for the PAL program would be its use with students who exhibit patterns of poor attendance. This researcher was quite pleased by the tutor's initiative and enthusiasm in attempting to reschedule missed tutoring sessions. Perhaps the empowerment and responsibility that PAL provides is an incentive for these students to attend school on a regular basis.

Information regarding the PAL Program will be available at the school site via the Assistant Principal. This researcher is also willing to review results of the PAL Program with other educators who are interested in adopting such a program.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Tutor Log Sheet

Appendix A

Tutor Log Sheet

WEEK OF: _____

	Lesson Plan	Student Comments	Teacher Comments
MON			

Appropriate Greetings ____
Listening Attentively ___
Asking Questions of the Tutee___
Answering Questions from the Tutee___
Complimenting and Praising the Tutee___

WED			

Appropriate Greetings ___
Listening Attentively ___
Asking Questions of the Tutee___
Answering Questions asked by the Tutee ___
Complimenting and Praising Tutee ___

FRI			

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Appendix B

Parent Permission

Appendix B

Parent Permission Letter

Dear Parents,

Your child has been selected to participate in a practicum study. Selection for this study is based on the issuance of a second after-school detention during the second nine weeks.

The study will involve your child in a cross-age tutoring program. Each student will be responsible for tutoring a kindergarten or first grader two times per week. In doing this, it is hoped that the children in this study will have an increase in self-esteem and responsibility. It is also hoped that the number of after-school detentions obtained throughout the second semester will be less than in the previous semester.

I appreciate your cooperation in this study. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Kathy Keane

I give my permission for my child's data to be included in group data in a final report. No names will be used.

_____
Signature

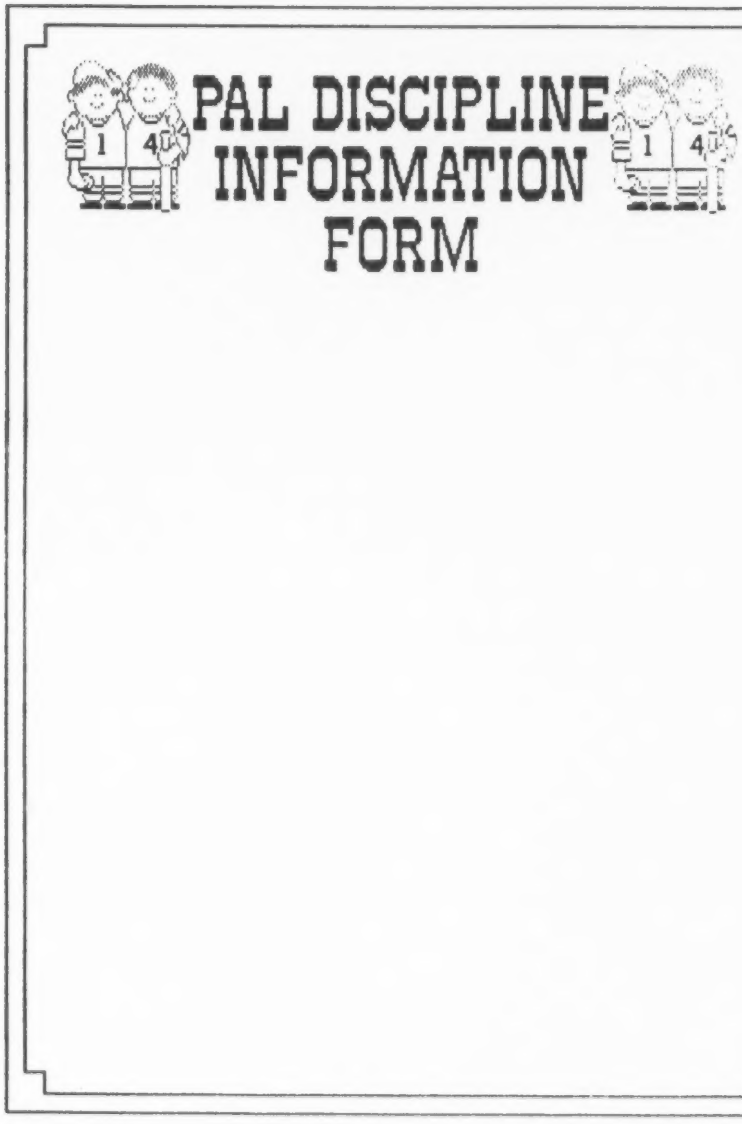
_____
Date

Appendix C

PAL Discipline Information Form

Appendix C

PAL Discipline Information Form



Appendix D

Tutee Information Sheet

Appendix D

TUTEE INFORMATION SHEET

Student Name_____Sex____

Teacher Name_____Room____

Areas requiring one-to-one tutoring:

1._____

2._____

Strategies that work well with this child:

_____

_____

_____

COMMENTS:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix E

Tutor/Tutee Schedule

Appendix E

TUTOR/TUTEE SCHEDULE

GRADES 4-6

Tutoring will begin the week of February 24, 1992 and will conclude during the week of May 9, 1992.

Tutor	Tutee	Days	Time	Room

Tutors will meet with the tutee's teacher on the following Fridays between 1:30 and 2:00:
3/6/92, 3/23/92, 4/10/92, 4/24/92.

Tutors will meet with the researcher on the following Fridays between 1:30 and 2:00:
2/28/92, 3/13/92, 3/27/92, 4/17/92, 5/1/92